

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims replaces all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1 to 4. (Canceled)

5. (Currently Amended) A method for use in activating ~~managing~~ an intermediate interface of a telecommunication network, ~~the method comprising:~~ comprised of connecting one or more links that connect a local exchange and an access network ~~for establishing and maintaining subscriber connections of the network; providing one or more links, each wherein a link including comprises~~ a plurality of transmission channels for exchanging ~~user~~ information, the plurality of transmission channels comprising communication channels for exchanging communication information, at least one of the communication channels being part of a first protection group, the method comprising: ~~of the subscriber connections;~~

at activation of the intermediate interface, establishing a primary communication path on a target communication channel in the first protection group;

allocating a communication path group to the target communication channel, the communication path group being allocated based on messages exchanged via the primary communication path, the messages containing information for use in allocating communication path groups to transmission channels; and

releasing communication paths in the first protection group for use in exchanging communication information, the communication paths being released after the communication path group is successfully allocated to the target communication channel.

~~exchanging communication information for controlling the subscriber connections;
providing the plurality of transmission channels as communication channels for exchanging the communication information, based on a pre-established configuration of the intermediate interface, and allocating at least one of the communication channels to a first protection group;
exchanging the communication information in the operational state of the intermediate interface via communication paths combined in communication groups, and allocating one or more of the communication paths and each of the communication groups to the communication channels;
and combining the communication paths in a separate communication path group allocated to the first protection group.~~

6. (Canceled)

7. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 6 5, wherein the intermediate interface is activated from a default state allocating the separate communication path group to the communication channel containing the primary communication path comprises exchanging protection switching operation messages via the primary communication path.

8. (Canceled)

9. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 5, wherein ~~if the at least one of the communication channels has been allocated to the first protection group, setting up~~ the primary ~~protection~~ communication path is established in a first communication channel ~~that provides to provide~~ an operational protocol for communication ~~the primary communication path~~ between the local exchange and the access network, the first communication channel comprising the target communication channel.

10. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 7 5, wherein ~~the further comprising exchanging the protection switching operation~~ messages are exchanged via a protection protocol~~[[,]]; and~~

wherein the primary communication path comprises a protection path in the ~~at least one of the target~~ communication channel, ~~of the first protection group~~ the protection path for use in exchanging the protection protocol ~~related to the allocation of the communication path groups to the communication channels.~~

11. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 7 5, wherein, after releasing the ~~first protection group for each of the remaining communication path groups~~ communication paths, the method comprises, for a remaining communication path group:

allocating the remaining communication path group to a communication channel that is not ~~belonging to~~ in the first protection group, the remaining communication path group being allocated based on ~~the protection switching operation~~ messages exchanged via the first protection group; and

releasing the remaining communication ~~paths of the communication~~ path group for use in exchanging communication information, ~~if allocating the communication path group to a communication channel not belonging to the first protection group has been done successfully.~~

12. (Currently Amended) A system for ~~managing~~ activating an intermediate interface of a telecommunication network, the system comprising:

a local exchange; and

an access network for exchanging information with the local exchange over the intermediate interface ~~establishing and maintaining subscriber connections~~ of the telecommunication network;

the intermediate interface comprising a plurality of links, each a link including comprising a plurality of transmission channels for exchanging user information, the plurality of transmission channels comprising communication channels for exchanging communication information, at least one of the communication channels being part of a first protection group of the subscriber connections and for exchanging communication information for controlling the subscriber connections;

wherein, at activation, the system:

establishes a primary communication path on a target communication channel in the first protection group;

allocates a communication path group to the target communication channel, the communication path group being allocated based on messages exchanged via the primary

communication path, the messages containing information for use in allocating

communication path groups to transmission channels; and

releases communication paths in the first protection group for use in exchanging

communication information, the communication paths being released after the

communication path group is successfully allocated to the target communication channel.

~~the plurality of transmission channels provided as communication channels for
exchanging the communication information based on a pre-established configuration of the
intermediate interface, and at least one of the communication channels allocated to a first
protection group;~~

~~a plurality of communication paths for exchanging the communication information in the
operational state of the intermediate interface, the plurality of communication paths combined in
communication groups, wherein one or more of the communication paths and each of the
communication groups are allocated to the communication channels, and~~

~~a separate communication path group allocated to the first protection group combined
with the communication paths.~~

13. (New) The system of claim 12, wherein the intermediate interface is activated from a default state.

14. (New) The system of claim 12, wherein the primary communication path is established in a first communication channel to provide an operational protocol for

communication between the local exchange and the access network, the first communication channel comprising the target communication channel.

15. (New) The system of claim 12, wherein the messages are exchanged via a protection protocol; and

wherein the primary communication path comprises a protection path in the target communication channel, the protection path for use in exchanging the protection protocol.

16. (New) The system of claim 12, wherein, after releasing the communication paths, the system performs, for a remaining communication path group:

allocating the remaining communication path group to a communication channel that is not in the first protection group, the remaining communication path group being allocated based on messages exchanged via the first protection group; and

releasing the remaining communication path group for use in exchanging communication information.